



Seven Point Two

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4 pages / 1945 words / Numbered chapter-lets / 12 point Liberation Serif / One photographic image – page 1

Synopsis:

Short story. Authority dealt with on a relatively sane level. Survival based autobiographical story hyperboled half to death for the sheer joy of it. Real events, true story origins.

Topics:

- Traffic and the rigors of
- New Mexico Drivers
- Rat Poison
- Medical Professionals
- Pulmonary Embolism
- Prescription Drugs
- Republicans
- Road Construction
- Automobiles as Sentient Beings
- Female vs Male Genitalia
- Fake Advertisement
- Asphalt Mining
- Flag Based Communications

Seven Point Two

S. LaRue – 11/2013

I

A current physical malady requires I visit a clinic regularly to have the thin-ness of my blood tested. They call it an INR test, which means little to a layperson such as myself. Bottom line is, they're just checking to see that if you happen to be attacked by your cat, your blood, which may have become the consistency of air, due to poison they've prescribed you, with the expectation you'll intentionally ingest, against all logic, doesn't float away when your skin is lacerated by your beloved roomie, Mr. Whiskers.

They base your rat poison intake level requirements on this test. Low number means more poison, high means less. I know; it sounds kooky, but rat poison (Warfarin) is the current medication prescribed as a blood viscosity control mechanism by highly educated medical system participants to those of us unimportant, low income types. Go figure?

Some Yahoo came up with a suitable number associated with the test and once administered, a Doctor, or in most cases, a skilled technician in the employ of the medical community, adjusts your dosage accordingly. Hell, a chimp could do it, but it's always some overly-cheerful, recently married hottie, which I gotta say, is way better than a distant relative that never gives public masturbation a second thought. The cheerful usually practice ample hygienic rituals and they're a lot more careful with the stabby-things than I would imagine your average poo-slinger might be.

II

Something worth considering here is that I made my living for a good long while doing nothing but driving automobiles. I've yet to be in an accident in which I was at fault, have never been ticketed for an infraction wherein someone or something was damaged by a vehicle I was piloting. From the Nash Metropolitan, to Jaguar Limousines, from 1970s muscle cars, to the highly questionable tow-barring-of a dump truck with a garden variety pickup truck. I even did a stint as an interstate truck driver—there are few vehicles I've not had the pleasure of testing to their limits. That being said, finding the quickest route from one given point to another, has become habit. I flowchart every excursion, I never run out of gas and I drive as though Satan were in hot pursuit. I am, without question, the safest driver I've ever encountered.



You learn a lot about human nature when you drive as much as I have. Telltale movements by the pilot of a vehicle you happen to be sharing the road with, will give away their intention, though they may not know it themselves. Styles and conditions of automobiles are also telling, when it comes to predicting the next move of your fellow blacktop Ninjas. If

some guy is going to make a left turn from the far right lane, crossing three lanes of traffic to do so, body language and vehicular perturbations say so, loud and clear. You just have to know what to look for. Should you ever require safe, speedy deliver of your person to any number of destinations and are unable to manifest the where-with-all to undertake the journey unassisted, it would be in your best interest to contact me. Licensed, bonded insured, etc...

III

The juxtaposition of the two sets of information above, meshed in a tangible way recently; I had to visit a clinic on the far side of town, as the clinic within semaphore distance was unable to receive me. From my dimly lit confines I mentally flowcharted my trip, dressed appropriately, insured I had enough cigarettes and water for the outing, gave myself ample time to arrive at the predesignated appointment, fired up the Volvo, and was on my way.

A personal edict is to avoid driving in my humble little burg after 12 noon. Once the populous has been given their lunch break, the streets become far more difficult to navigate without incident. This goes double if using the freeway is your intention. Perhaps it was the rat poison talking, but I decided to use the freeway, in a Devil-may-care flourish, casting reason to the dogs, which is unusual for me where vehicular operational situations are a consideration.

IV

As I approached the nearest on-ramp, much to my dismay I saw that the freeway was effectively acting as a parking lot for those intending to employ it as a means of getting thru town as quickly as possible. The frontage road was also jammed with drivers trying to escape the vehicular embolism before them. My flowchart needed to either be discarded or altered significantly and my time coordinates were now in question.

I believe in flowcharting, use it in every aspect of my life but had not allowed for a branch offering suggestions in this situation. Statistical Process Control regimens (SPC) seldom allow for the spectacular.

I instinctually took to residential streets, but before doing so, saw a flashing sign alongside the freeway stating there was an accident at the interchange three miles ahead and to expect delays. That's how awesome my home town is – a single traffic accident, and the whole place shuts down as if a nuclear attack were imminent.

I avoided the better part of those trying to flee the freeway option denied them, yet was still far from my destination and the clock was ticking. I reached my surface street of choice and put the Volvo thru it's paces, breathed a sign of relief.

V

Road construction hampered me so I detoured, which led to more construction. I detoured again, thought the frontage road shadowing the freeway may have opened up, as I had gone several miles beyond what I imagined was the location of the commerce-halting-wreckage blocking the town's main thoroughfare. The frontage road was oddly vacant, lonely, a tumbleweed casually rolled by which gave

me pause as I considered my next move, but I whipped onto it anyway, ignoring my instinct that trouble's-a-brewin' if a commonly busy stretch of road is void of traffic.

I'd never have made such a foolhardy move had I not, unaware at this point, been under the influence of rat poison and my worst fears were realized. The frontage road was also under construction, though no warning was given via signage. It came to a complete dead end in the form of an unsightly mountain, of what I can only describe as asphalt "tailings" from a nearby asphalt mining operation. This is when I came to the conclusion the rat poison was having its way with me and flowcharted how I was going to deal with the State Troopers when asked, later that evening, why I was parked in a ditch, next to an asphalt mountain, weeping and apparently trying to claw my eyes out.

VI

A 20 watt light bulb appeared slightly above my head, sputtered to life. I remembered my status as a bona fide testicle owner (ignored the sidebar listing the virtues of a birth canal's vastly superior reasoning ability), surveyed the scene with renewed vigor and a completed flowchart appeared in my mind:

- * Through the hole in the fence
- * Navigate the apartment complex parking lot
- * Traverse the shopping mall's "deliciously Republican inspired" parking area (little coves with no exits aside from a single lane forcing parkers onto a dangerously narrow, two lane artery feed)
- * And onto a nearby surface street going the wrong direction, (right side of the road, heading away from my destination)
- * Pull a U-Turn at the first intersection correcting directional malfunction
- * Improvise by surveying the scene, possibly construct sub-flowchart

I had nine minutes and approximately seven miles to cover should I arrive on time. The odds were against me. "Fiddle-sticks!" was heard from my groin area in the voice of PeeWee Herman.

VII

I was in an unfamiliar area, but that didn't mean North was no longer North. Afternoon traffic had been building and the streets were filled with drivers on cell phones, eating fried chicken, striking out at juvenile passengers in the seats behind them – doing anything other than driving with any sort of intent, thus making the dirt road to my left more appealing as each precariously balanced jumbo soda fell from mini-van dashboards and into the laps of distracted dumbasses.

Quick note here – I don't even listen to the radio while driving, for the same reason I don't wear a helmet when motorcycling; auditory information regarding your surroundings is paramount, especially when undertaking the perilous activity of operating a motor vehicle among many others. Piloting heavy machinery that has the potential of ending another's life, if approached in a careless fashion, is irresponsible and ample proof of a person's inability to think of anyone but themselves. Eating while driving is something I consider recklessness of the highest water.

The dirt road led to a trailer park, once puzzled thru, like a rat in a maze sans poison, it opened onto the very street I needed to be on – a straight shot to my destination – and it was as if the Volvo knew before

I did, leapt into first gear and opened up. I'd been driving for 42 minutes.

VIII

Life, with a little help from my father's razor strop, had taught me to allow X amount of "unexpected encounter time," when appointments are a part of your reason for travel. Luckily, I'd calculated for exactly as much time as was needed to get fucked around and still arrive promptly at the given and agreed upon Station Of The Blood Testers.

I was stabbed, milked and the result was immediately available. With genuine concern, the clinician shared my blood viscosity number, which she termed *dangerously high*, as in, three times as high as is considered safe. Protocol in a situation such as this requires the patient to report immediately to the nearest blood-thickening-specialist where massive doses of baking powder will be administered intravenously, a sizable bill will manifest and the patient can then tussle with the cat unconcerned around the possibility of bleeding out, should their skin be compromised.

Said clinician had gotten a quick read on my personality, possibly gathered data from my medical records, somehow knew I was not in the habit of undertakings that require acting responsibly where my health is concerned. If I see doing what is asked of me as having little benefit, I skip it. She shook her head knowingly when I laughed a bit and opted out of an emergency-level visit to some joint that can't really do a damned thing except repeatedly test you until your bill is sufficiently within their standard of you being labeled "healthy." I thanked her for confirming my suspicion I had been prescribed an overdose and made my exit.

IX

My clinic visit lasted three minutes, closer to four actually, but I always round down.

21 minutes to get home, unencumbered by wreckage or the city's department of road maintenance. I had one cigarette left.

X

I contacted the clinic nearest me and set up an appointment for early the following week. Their conformation indicated their semaphore training program could use revisiting.